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OIA-2023-4870

15 December 2023

Jake Bengé
fyi-request-24786-108c2d02@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Jake Bengé

I refer to your email of 19 November 2023 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), *any and all information regarding loitering munition, specifically the Drone 40 produced by DefendTex.*

Your request for any and all information regarding loitering munitions is declined in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA as the information cannot be made available without a substantial collation and research effort. For your information, however, previously released documents that concern a BattleLab established to trial the utility and viability of loitering munitions as a force protection weapon are enclosed. Where indicated, information is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA to avoid prejudice to the security and defence of New Zealand and section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy. Cost information is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(j) of the OIA to avoid prejudice to negotiations.

Note, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) experimentation with loitering munition capability is ongoing. As part of the wider experimentation process, three DefendTex D40 drones were acquired as a representative platform only. The inert light and sound version and the Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance version of the D40 system are being utilised for this purpose. No decision has been made regarding the acquisition and introduction into service of loitering munition capability.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website.

Yours sincerely

AJ WOODS
Air Commodore
Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosures:

1. Precision Loitering Munition Experimentation: Request for Approval to Initiate Battle Lab, 16 April 2021
2. Capability Branch Joint Experimentation Cell Storyboard: Loitering Munition Experimentation Update